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Sirhan Studies Occultism, But Spurns Newspapers

ACLU Lawyer Only One He Wants to See

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, indicted for murder in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, reads books on occultism but spurns newspapers in his 12-by-12- foot jail cell, a civil rights lawyer said Tuesday.

At Sirhan's request, A. L. Wirin, Southern California counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, has kept a close eye on the case since the Jordanian immigrant's arrest last Wednesday. His role is not to represent Sirhan but to help safeguard his rights to a fair trial. He is helping, too, with arrangements for a defense attorney.

Wirin, who has talked to Sirhan in jail several times, told a news conference he did not know how long he will be permitted to do so. He said Sirhan has not asked to see anyone else.

Sirhan is being held in the small cell deep within the jail's infirmary wing. Wirin said Sirhan has expressed "contentment and satisfaction" with his treatment.

SEARCHED AT JAIL

Wirin is searched each time he visits the jail, as is the deputy who accompanies him to the cell. Other deputies in rotation remain inside the cell with Sirhan 24 hours a day.

Although denied radio or television, the defendant is allowed newspapers but "he has advised me he doesn't want to read them," Wirin said. He also is allowed a few minutes of exercise daily in the corridor outside his cell.

The ACLU counsel declined to name the books for which Sirhan has asked, nor would he identify the Protestant religious organization with which Sirhan told him he was affiliated. Wirin also has arranged police protection for Sirhan's mother, Mary, and other members of the family in Pasadena.

Earlier, Wirin met with Superior Court Judge Donald Wright, the presiding judge, and Superior Court Judge Arthur L. Alarcon, who arraigned Sirhan last Friday. At that time Judge Alarcon ordered all peace officers and public officials to refrain from discussing the case.

ASKED FOR CHOICE

Alarcon also said then that the County Bar Association would be asked to recommend a private lawyer to represent Sirhan, up to now served by the public defender's office. The defendant has requested two attorneys. Neither would receive a fee because Sirhan said he can't afford to pay.

At the meeting with Wirin both judges said Sirhan has the right to move for a new attorney. The motion would have to be made by the defender's office.

Wirin also met with Leonard Janofsky, president of the bar association, to ask that group to recommend a private lawyer.

The bar group said "neither aye nor nay," he said. Such a choice would be submitted for approval to Alarcon and Wright, and Sirhan would make the final decision.

Wirin said he understood from press accounts that two prominent attorneys, F. Lee Bailey and Melvin Belli, had offered to represent Sirhan, but he